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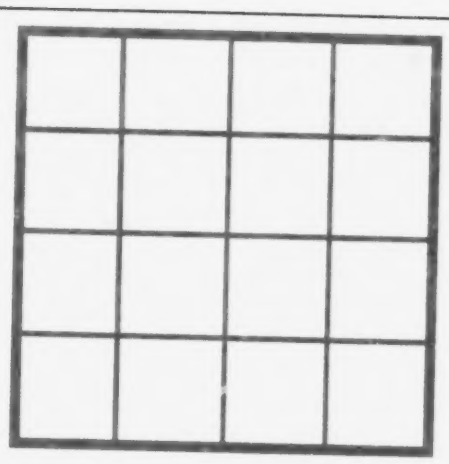

ARCHEOLOGICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
Technical Brief No. 9, October 1990

TRAINING and USING VOLUNTEERS in ARCHEOLOGY: A Case Study from Arkansas

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NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

In this age of rapid transformation of the earth's landscape, our only hope for recovery of any major portion of this history [that is written in the soil] is by nearly total involvement of the public (McGimsey 1972:6).

Introduction

Involvement of the public in archeology can and has taken many forms. The quote from McGimsey above reflects the philosophy of public archeology that he espouses, and which has led many, both professional and avocational archeologists, into cooperative endeavors of mutual benefit. There are pros and cons to such programs for both sides. There are professional archeologists who condemn any archeology done by anyone without an advanced academic degree and several years of training. There are avocational archeologists (and I use this term to mean people who do scientific archeology as a hobby not as a profession) who have met with the above mentioned kind of professional and as a consequence think all professional archeologists are mean spirited and want all the sites and artifacts for themselves. There are also people of all persuasions, all degrees of training and experience, who wish to cooperate to record and preserve information from the past in a way that will be personally satisfying and rewarding, as well as scientifically appropriate.

Until the millennium comes, there will be pothunters and dealers in antiquities -- those who are more interested in the artifacts as a commodity than in the information associated with them. There also will be, as there always have been, those interested in the past and in the techniques of archeology who are not professionally trained but who wish to contribute to the accumulation and the preservation of information. Given the premise that prompted McGimsey's statements, that the land is being transformed and sites destroyed at an accelerating rate, it behooves all who are interested in archeological preservation to find some satisfying and productive ways to achieve our goals of personal satisfaction and scientific advancement. Establishment of Archaeology Weeks (Hoffman and Lerner 1988) is one way; partnerships with landowners is another (Henderson 1989); training programs such as the one described in this brief are yet another.

There have been and are archeological training programs in many States. The Field School of the Texas Archeological Society is the largest and perhaps the oldest formal program for avocationals. It began two years before the Arkansas program, it lasts nine days, and it attracts 400 participants at a minimum.

The Arkansas Training Program for Avocational Archeologists was created in 1964 with two major goals: (1) providing interested citizens with the opportunity to gain information on how to do archeology "right," and (2) multiplying manyfold the eyes and ears of the few professional archeologists in efforts to preserve the State's past. The program was initially a joint venture between the University of Arkansas Museum and the Arkansas Archeological Society, and then, in 1967, with the creation of the Arkansas Archeological Survey, that agency assumed the coordinating and supervisory efforts from the University Museum. In 1972 a formal Certification Program was created. It does not replace the regular Field and Laboratory Training Program but rather supplements it.

The Field and Laboratory Training Program

Field sessions for the Training Program are scheduled by the Survey to coordinate with research and other obligations of the professional staff. From 1964 to 1971 these sessions lasted nine days -- a full week and the weekend on each side. With the establishment of the Certification Program in 1972, the field session was expanded to 19 days -- two weeks and the weekend at each end -- in order to accommodate the teaching of seminars, which are at the heart of the Certification Program. All participants must attend a four-hour orientation program the first day of their first time in the program. If they attend every year, thereafter they attend a short orientation their first day at the site.

Before describing the Training Program in more detail, let me say that in the course of 27 years, 23 different sites have been tested, most of which would have seen no work but for this program. Over 600 people have registered in the Certification Program and have attended from 1 to 18 years, about 100 are actually actively pursuing certification goals (see below), and 1 has achieved certification as a Field Archeologist. Attendance at the field sessions since 1972 has ranged from a low of around 80 in the heat-record year of 1980 to a high

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LEVELS and AREAS of CERTIFICATION

LEVELS	AREAS of SPECIALIZATION		
IV. Certified	Field Archeologist		
III. Certified	Archeological Technician		
II. Certified	Crew Member	Lab Technician	Site Surveyor
I. Provisional	Crew Member	Lab Technician	Site Surveyor

Figure 1. Chart indicating the levels and categories of the Certification Program.

of 141, which is considered a maximum, in 1990. An effort is made to keep a supervisor/trainee ratio of 1 to 6.

The Training Program provides an opportunity for avocational archeologists to gain experience in all phases of archeological work -- excavation, site survey, laboratory processing, and analysis, under professional supervision. The only prerequisites are: (1) membership in the Arkansas Archeological Society; (2) payment of an annual registration free; and (3) agreement to abide by the rules and procedures for research set by the Survey. Anyone can take part in the Training Program, do field and lab work, and attend seminars provided he or she registers ahead of time.

The Certification Program

The Certification Program is an option within the Training Program. It provides Society members with a means of: (1) obtaining extended training, which includes formal seminars, in various aspects of archeology; (2) having their experience and training recognized through achieving "provisional" and then "certified" levels of performance; and (3) keeping a running log of these achievements, which is formally reviewed by a joint Survey/Society committee prior to awarding of certificates of achievement.

The program is organized in a series of eight categories on four levels (Figure 1). The basic level, Provisional, has three categories: Crew Member, Lab Technician, and Site Surveyor. The training and experience on this level are minimal -- one 20-hour seminar and 40 hours of supervised experience for Provisional Crew Member and Lab Technician, and one seminar and reporting three new sites on completed State site forms for the Provisional Site Surveyor.

The second level, Certified Crew Member, Lab Technician, and Site Surveyor, provides considerably more training in the field or lab, requires demonstrated skills in various field and laboratory techniques, and includes satisfactory completion of a series of topical seminars. By the time each of these six categories is completed, the individual is expected to be able to work under loose guidance and is also expected to be able to supervise other workers. At this level, the individual should understand how and why decisions are made in the field, and how these decisions influence the interpretation and analysis of data.

The third level is a single category, Certified Archeological Technician. This is attained when all six previous categories have been completed and a formal academic course on the archeology of eastern North America, or its equivalent, has been taken.

The fourth lev 'ertified Field Archeologist, is attained when the indivi as completed all previous categories and has designed, carried out, and published a research project under the supervision of a professional archeologist.

Figure 2. Ed Jackson, Survey archeologist, instructs David Fuller and Jean Adams in the intricacies of identifying small pieces of animal bone during the Identification and Analysis seminar. (All photos in this technical brief are courtesy of Hester A. Davis.)

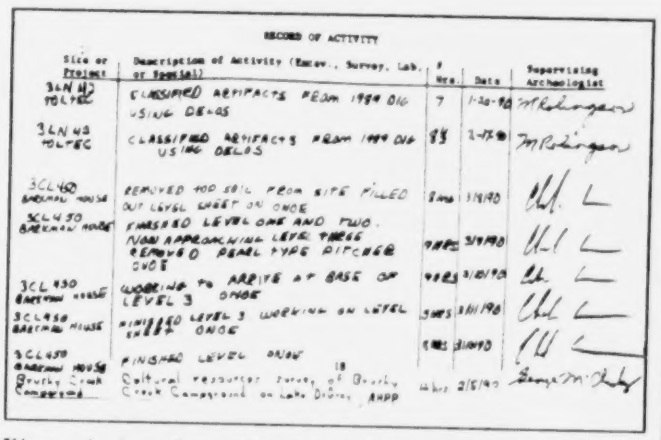
Some Particulars

There are two aspects of this Certification Program that make it unique: one is the seminars, and the other is the Log Book. At least these were unique when the program was initiated in 1972; since that time some other programs have adopted, and adapted, some of these ideas.

Twelve seminars are offered, each lasting approximately 20 hours (Figure 2). During any one field training session, usually eight or nine seminars are given, and every seminar is offered at least once every two years. These seminars are:

Basic Site Surveying Techniques;
Basic Field Excavation Techniques;
Basic Laboratory Techniques;
Lithic Description and Analysis;
Ceramic Description and Analysis;
Identification and Analysis of Animal Bone;
Identification and Analysis of Human Bone;
Establishing Time in Prehistory;
Field and Laboratory Photography;
Mapping Techniques;
Research Design;
Arkansas Archeology.

Figure 3. Marvin Jeter, Survey archeologist, instructs Joyce Drennen in the fine points of sorting artifacts by raw material.



RECORD OF ACTIVITY

Site or Project	Description of Activity (Excav., Survey, Lab., or Special)	# Hrs.	Date	Supervising Archeologist
3LN 42 TOLTEC	CLASSIFIED ARTIFACTS FROM 1984 DIG USING DELOS	7	1-30-90	M Robinson
3LN 43 TOLTEC	CLASSIFIED ARTIFACTS FROM 1984 DIG USING DELOS	8½	2-17-90	M Robinson
3CL450 BARTRAM HOUSE	REMOVED TOP SOIL FROM SITE FILLED OUT LEVEL SHEET ON ONDE	8	3/9/90	
3CL450 BARTRAM HOUSE	FINISHED LEVEL ONE AND TWO. NOW APPROACHING LEVEL THREE REMOVED PEARL TYPE PITCHER ONDE	7	3/9/90	
3CL450 BARTRAM HOUSE	WORKING TO ARRIVE AT BASE OF LEVEL 3 ONDE	9	3/10/90	
3CL450 BARTRAM HOUSE	FINISHED LEVEL 3 WORKING ON LEVEL 4 ONDE	5	3/11/90	
3CL450 BARTRAM HOUSE	FINISHED LEVEL ONDE	8	3/20/90	
Bayou Creek Campground	Cultural resources survey of Bayou Creek Campground on Lake Dierks, AHPP	18 hrs	2/5/90	

Figure 4. Actual page from a participant's Log Book.

During the summer field session, each seminar is taught four hours a day over a five-day period; the other half of the day is spent in the field or in the lab (Figure 3). The Basic Excavation Techniques seminar is considered a full day course, with half a day in the field and half a day in lectures. Since many people have now taken all 12 seminars, often one special seminar is offered each field session. Historic Archeology, Historic Indians in Arkansas, and Cultural Resource Management have been offered in the past. Sometimes one of the seminars is taught at other times during the year at one of the Arkansas Archeological Survey Research Stations, at various locations throughout the State.

The Log Book is based on the same principle as a Navy ship's log. On a daily basis, each individual can keep a running accounting of experience and time devoted to different activities (Figure 4). In the front there is a summary sheet requiring supervisors' signatures as the various requirements for a particular category are met.

The Log Book, which is the responsibility of the individual, and evaluation sheets prepared by each supervisor or seminar teacher, are used by the Evaluation Committee to review a person's achievements. The Committee then makes a recommendation to the Survey Director that a certificate be awarded. The Evaluation Committee consists of three Society members and two Survey staff members, with the State Archeologist serving *ex officio*. Both the Survey director and the Society president sign the certificates (Figures 5).

The Upside of [or Good Things About] the Program

There are, of course, two ways to look at this program, one from the Survey staff and one from the Society participants. From the Survey's viewpoint, the program as a whole has produced an avocational work force with known expertise, upon which it can, and does, call for help (Figures 6 and 7). In one emergency situation, 60 people showed up to work on 3 consecutive weekends, from dawn until dusk, helping rescue a landleveled prehistoric cemetery area. Another emergency involved the discovery of a large cellar in downtown Little Rock, which had been part of the mansion of a major figure in early 19th century Arkansas politics.

Figure 5. Anna Parks (right) receives a certificate from Ann Early, Survey archeologist, who is coordinator of the Certification Program.

Figure 6. Members of the Kadohadacho Chapter of the Arkansas Archeological Society help Survey archeologist Frank Schambach test a site to be affected by a small water supply lake.

Figure 7. David Jearne (left) and Herschel Kitchens (right), two past president of the Arkansas Archeological Society, show off mastodon bones discovered in the eroding bank of the Red River in southwest Arkansas. More than a dozen volunteers helped Survey archeologist Frank Schambach excavate these prehistoric remains.

The developers allowed 10 days for excavations, and volunteers were there every day, working under the supervision of the Survey's historical archeologist. As members progress through the program, the Survey has called upon individuals to help with contract projects as well; one National Park Service contract on a data recovery mitigation project required the use of trained volunteers. In other instances, people advanced in the program have been hired as crew members. These people know the Survey's recordkeeping system, and the Survey staff knows who has had what kinds of experience and who can supervise the less experienced crew people or other volunteers. All the Survey's Research Stations use the local members for lab work all year long, and several avocational members with computer backgrounds enter data into the Survey's computerized cataloguing system.

An additional practical benefit of the Field Training Program in general is that, with reduced State funding for hired crews, the two-and-a-half week summer field program provides a concentrated time during which one of the Survey archeologists gets a lot of field testing done in support of his or her research. For several years this Field Training Program and projects using trained volunteers from the program have provided the only opportunities for field work for the Survey staff. The Survey has calculated that its fiscal commitment, in terms of staff time alone, is equaled by the volunteers' time, figuring the going hourly wage for crews.

For the Society members, the advantages of the program are probably as diverse as the individuals themselves. One Society member has written:

> For the Society's part, its members are wildly grateful for the professional network they may draw upon, and are acutely aware that the information and training they are getting is rarely available to amateurs in such a comprehensive and inexpensive form ... Although most participants come from Arkansas, there are those who travel hundreds of miles to attend the Society dig. Frank Breunig, a retired businessman from Atlanta, has been coming since 1972 when he spotted an article about the program in the National Observer; bassoonist Virginia Hourigan roars down from New York on her motorcycle; Bill Jordan of Illinois arrives before anyone else and stays until the last tent is packed and gone. Many are drawn because they found public archeology programs lacking in their own states (Newell 1988).

Keeping track of time and experience in a Log Book, and periodically earning recognition for achievement provides real satisfaction, whether (or not) an individual intends to strive for the goal of Certified Field Archeologist.

Finally, compared to some other training programs, this one is relatively inexpensive. The annual registration fee for the Field Training Program is graduated depending upon how many days an individual stays, with a maximum charge at the present time of $25. This pays for the large packet of information participants receive upon registration and another packet distributed at the site with field and laboratory procedures specific to the site. Registration for the Certification Program is a one-time fee of $12.50, which essentially pays for the Log Book. The Society runs a camp for members during the dig for which there is a small nightly fee. Members must provide their own food and usually provide their own transportation during the dig as well. This can add up if the seminars are held at a local school 10 miles from the site and camp. Large excavation equipment is provided by the Survey, but each member must have his or her own trowel, tape, and similar small equipment.

The Downside of [or Some Less-Than-Good Things About] the Program

From the Survey's point of view, the commitment of time and personnel goes far beyond that of the Training Program itself; in terms of staff time alone, this is an expensive program. One staff member and her secretary spend at least a quarter of their time maintaining copies of all certification records and Log Books, preparing information for the Evaluation Committee, and then, as registrations come in for the summer program, assigning individuals to the seminars and other experiences that they need to advance in the program.

Figure 8. The science classroom of the Sparkman High School converted into an archeological processing lab, June 1987.

The Survey archeologist, who is field director for the summer program, spends at least a month full time prior to the field program figuring out how to make best use of 120 to 140 people over a 2-week period to achieve the goals of the research. At the time of the field program, 10 to 12 staff members devote from 10 to 20 days full time to the program, either teaching seminars or acting as supervisors in the field or lab, or both. This takes archeologists away from their own research, interrupting their own programs, which always need attention.

Finally, there has never been a field session in which all the excavated material was processed by the end of the two-and-a-half weeks, despite having a half dozen people assigned to the lab every day and scheduling several evening labs. This is not unusual, of course, and during the following months local Society members work in the Survey archeologist's lab so that everything is at least cleaned and numbered before the next field program. However, even when a different archeologist is directing the program each summer, the ability to do a final analysis and write a report on this work is often curtailed by the Survey archeologist's normal duties during the year. Reports on several summer projects have been published, but there are several that have not. There are few trainees who are advanced enough in the program to provide help at this stage, although one participant is writing up one of the excavation projects as his final report for the category of Certified Field Archeologist. The backlog of material to analyze and write up puts some pressure on the Survey staff when there is a commitment to have a training program every summer.

From the individual participant's viewpoint, the program takes a long time to complete. Only one person has achieved the "rank" of Certified Field Archeologist with the publication of a report on personal research (White 1987). Two more are in the throes of completing their final research projects.

Members want to work at sites where there are a lot of things to find. Sometimes the site an archeologist needs help with doesn't have lots of goodies; recording a feature isn't half as much fun as finding artifacts. Working in the field in Arkansas in June or July can be brutally hot, and storms can be destructively severe. Although all registrants receive Do's and Don'ts and Guidelines for Conduct before the program begins, some new members are disappointed that they cannot work exactly where and when they want, that they must spend some time in the lab, that they need to get up at 5:30 in the morning in order to be ready for work at 6:30, and that they can't keep any of the artifacts they find. These people generally don't return for a second year.

Logistics

Aside from the pros and cons, the logistics of providing for the summer field program are complex, although no more so, perhaps, than those of the Texas Archeological Society's Field School and not much more so than many other field schools and certain overseas projects.

The site chosen for an excavation must be part of one of the Survey archeologist's research programs, it must be accessible, and there must be space for a minimum of a dozen cars and trucks. There must be room to accommodate a maximum of 60 people at any one time, and, preferably, it should have artifacts and features so that members will learn how to excavate and record them. It should not be too deep or too small. All these circumstances present the problem of accommodating lots of people for a short period of time.

The Society makes all arrangements for a camp site for its members, which must be close to the excavation site -- at least within reasonable driving distance. The campsite must be able to accommodate a maximum of 50 tents, campers, and an equivalent number of cars at any one time; portable toilets and potable water must be available; swimming or shower facilities must be found; ice and food supplies must be within reasonable driving distance; also, sites with shade trees are prefered. A local school is usually sought as the place for holding the seminars and for setting up the lab (Figure 8), so both site and camp should be within reasonable driving distance of a school. Sometimes this is a small rural school; sometimes a larger modern school. This past summer the Survey was able to borrow a high school's VCR for supplemental instruction in several of the seminars. There must be space for two seminars and an orientation program to be given at one time -- three classrooms at a minimum. We have made do sometimes in abandoned houses with no electricity and with the lab set up in a surplus army cook tent at the site.

A quirk in the State's geography and climate means that choices are somewhat limited. There are many sites in eastern Arkansas that need testing, but it simply is not possible to camp out in that part of the State after about June 15, because the mosquitoes will carry you away. In any event, there are very few places to camp in the eastern half of the State, which is largely under cultivation.

The Survey and the Society must work closely together in planning where the program will be held each summer and in arranging for all the appropriate accommodations. Basic decisions on where the program will be held and when must be made by early fall, so that all these arrangements can be made before March, when notices go out for registration, and so that Society members can plan their vacation time.

Several times we have held the program at the same site for two or three years in a row. The advantages are obvious; once the logistics are arranged for, the following year is simple, and the archeologist is able to retrieve a much better sample of information from the site. In addition, a multiple year commitment usually means a greater scientific return. On the other hand, moving the program around the State exposes more of the public to archeology, gives the participants a wider range of experience in different kinds of sites, and gives the field director a break from responsibility for the program every summer.

Summary

The Training Program in general and the Certification Program in particular, as developed in Arkansas, have taken great amounts of time, energy, and commitment on the part of the Arkansas Archeological Survey staff, but it has been more than worth it. There is now a trained core of individuals, with known skills, who are ready and willing to help at a moment's call. We can see, especially in those who return for several years, a definite shift in perception of and attitude toward archeological resources. The idea of ethics in archeology is evident in work and deed. Almost all of the field and laboratory research that Survey archeologists do involves some of these individuals to some extent. Usually more than 6000 volunteer hours are given by Society members to the Survey programs during the course of a year, more than half of them during the summer field program.

"The Arkansas Archeologist," an artist's conception, based upon detailed instructions provided to volunteers on what to expect and what to bring to the Training program. (Drawing by the University of Arkansas Museum's artist, 1964.)

We are often asked for information on the program, and the next question is usually, "How can you do all that?" It is in the context of the statewide, coordinated Survey program that it is possible for 10 to 12 professional archeologists to participate in the summer field program. No matter what their own research, or in what part of the State the Field Training Program is located, the Survey staff is expected to help with supervision and in teaching seminars. It is a part of their jobs. Even for those who receive no personal research benefit from the field program, the friendships and fellowship of the summer excavations are worth it!

Finally, what does it mean to an individual to be a Certified Field Archeologist? To have taken 10 years to go through all the steps, and to have tackled a full research project and have the report published? Certainly, such a person has as much, if not more, field and laboratory experience as most people who go through a regular M.A. academic program in two or three years. The concentrated work is not there, and the depth of the theoretical background may not be the same, but the ability to take on a research project is equal, and her or his Log Book attests to that training and experience. In addition, these individuals have had the advantage of working under supervision of a dozen archeologists, each with a different approach to a site and to ways of interpreting data. This breadth of experience is not equalled in the usual M.A. program.

The program does not turn out "professional archeologists" in any way that phrase is currently used. It is not designed to do that. These individuals do not meet the Federal requirements for a professional archeologist (National Park Service 1983) and therefore normally do not qualify to undertake cultural resource projects on their own. But the Survey would gladly give any one of these individuals support for her or his own research projects. The Survey hires individuals in the program on its projects, it asks them to check on sites that are reported to be disturbed, and the staff is ready and willing to answer all questions, and provide supervision for individual projects. The individual has the satisfaction of knowing that by pursuing an enjoyable avocation, he or she is not only helping in a truly scientific endeavor, but that this activity is not destroying the very information and material that is sought.

The Arkansas Archeological Society is neither as rich as its Texas counterpart, which hires its own professional archeologists, nor as highbrow as the Louisiana amateur group, whose recent annual meeting featured wine, cheeses, and Ivor Noel Hume. But what the down-home Arkansans lack in money and white tablecloths they seek to make up in skill, and some would judge them the best trained amateurs in the country (Newell 1988:1).

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